

## [John Z. Means]

ELLIOTT: [?]

John Zack [Means?], Pioneer of Davis County

Biography

District #20 El Paso, Texas

JAN 17 1938

January 10, 1938 600 words Pioneer history JOHN Z. [MEANS?], PIONEER OF DAVIS COUNTY

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"Uncle John" as he was universally known, was said to be the first white child born at Fort [?] Gavitt, Texas. Bor in 1854, he married Eva Gay in 1877. In 1884, one of the heavy ox-drawn wagons in use in those days carried an earnest young man, his family and all their worldly goods from a home in [Lampassas?] County out to the frontier.

John Z. [Means?] had heard of the range country from old hunters and determined to start for this virgin land where wild game was plentiful and a man could blaze a trail for himself if he possessed courage to do so. Just "comin west" they had no particular destination. Traveling slowly, they reached [?], then known as Antelope station on the railroad which was being completed into Sierra [Blanes?]. Here they stopped to rest, and found the country they had sought.

They saw black-tailed deer piled high in wagons, and learned that the land near the little frontier station could be settled up, so John told his wife "I've found the place where I want to go." Thirty miles beyond [Kent?], they turned their little herd of cattle loose on a stream and prepared to stay. What a prodigal welcome [?] [canyon?], the heart of the Davis Mountains, offered [this?] tired group of pioneers. Its remote beauty, restful climate, [limpid?] waters, and abundant game was more than they had ever expected on the long and [arduous?] trip.

Two other families, traveling in the same manner had made the journey with John Means, and they too knew that this was the promised land. 2 In later years the name of Means, Evans and Bean, were to make history in this part of the Big Bend of Texas, for it developed that they established a section which was to become one of the most famous and colorful cow countries in the world. A section where thirty or forty thousand head of fat cattle, bearing the brand of these people ranged over the mountains, whose peaks were named by Uncle John.

His wife Eva Gay Means found happiness in the new home, but she was "Camp meetin raised folks", and one thing was lacking. Here in the new country the family felt the need

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of clone association with other people in spiritual gatherings, and out of this need grew the Cowboys camp meeting, a unique spiritual get-together which has no duplicate. From thirty at the first meeting held in a brush arbor which served as a church, the meetings have grown to an attendance of thousands. Once a year, sometime in the month of August, Cattlemen of Texas and their friends meet in [Paisano?] Pass at the Bloys camp meeting grounds for a week of prayer and song service. Always the services of the best preachers available are secured.

Uncle John Means deeded the land in [Paisano?] Pass to the Bloys Camp Meeting Association, drilled water wells at his own expense and spent his life promoting the friendship and good will fostered in these meetings. It is said that for years the grand jury met in Davis county without returning a single [indictment?] in the county.

Uncle John Means died November 28, 1937. His wish to be interred in his beloved hills was granted. On a hill facing the huge tabernacle in the Bloys Camp Meeting grounds two graves were dug, and the body of Eva Gay Means who died twelve years previous, was removed from Valentine Texas and placed beside the body of her husband. Rev. George Truett of 3 Dallas came to conduct the funeral service.

In all the glory of a fall day when the hills were covered with flaming color and birds sang a [r?] quiet, [hosts?] of friends gathered at [Paisiano?] Pass in the Bloys camp meeting grounds to pay tribute to Uncle John and his wife. Cattle men from all over the country, some traveling 200 miles, came to be there for a few minutes. The truckloads of flowers were [?] on the hill beside the [Means?] cabin. Dr. Truett in speaking said "We are not gathered he in defeat, but to celebrate a victorious life."